

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
OMB-01 MCT-01 SY-05 OPR-02 AID-05 TRSE-00 FBO-02
SCS-03 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /069 W
-----151110Z 088605 /14

O 141220Z APR 77
FM AMCONSUL LAHORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1222
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAHORE 0371

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T E X T

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: SECURITY AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN PUNJAB

REF: (A) LAHORE 0368, (B) LAHORE 366 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: A NUMBER OF DEMONSTRATIONS OCCURED IN LAHORE AGAIN APRIL 13, BUT THERE WAS LESS VIOLENCE THAN PRE-IOUS DAYS. AITZAZ AHSAN, FORMER PUNJAB MINISTER, RESIGNED FROM PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY APRIL 13. FURTHER DEFECTIONS FROM BOTH PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES ARE EXPECTED. SOME BANKS IN LAHORE REPORTEDLY ARE FACING PROBLEMS AS PEOPLE RESPOND TO PNA CALL TO WITHDRAW DEPOSITS. VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS WERE HELD APRIL 13 IN SIALKOT AND PEACEFUL PROCESSIONS WERE TAKEN OUT IN A NUMBER OF OTHER PLACES. END SUMMARY.

2. VIOLENCE SUBSIDED SOMEWHAT IN LAHORE APRIL 13. ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS, ONLY ENCOUNTER BETWEEN POLICE
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AND DEMONSTRATORS TOOK PLACE IN SAMNABAD AREA AROUND 2100 HOURS WHERE POLICE RESORTED TO TEAR GASSING AND LATHI CHARGES TO BREACK UP CROWD WHICH HAD ATTEMPTED TO BLOCK MULTAN ROAD AND BURN DOWN HOUSE OF PPP NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBER S.M. YAQUB. NEWSWEEK CORRESPONDENT TONLY CLIFTON, WHO WAS AT SCENE, INFORMED CONGEN THAT DEMONSTRATORS WERE TEARING DOWN SIGN POSTS AND HURLING FIRE BOMBS AT PUBLIC PROPERTIES

"AS FAR AS THE EYE COULD SEE." POLICE OPENED FIRE AT VARIOUS POINTS, BUT CLIFTON HAD NO IDEA IF ANYONE WAS HIT. (PRESS DID NOT MENTION FIRING.) PPP WORKERS ATTEMPTED TO TAKE OUT A COUNTER PROCESSION BUT WERE DISPERSED BY PAKISTAN RANGERS. THIS IS FIRST TIME PPP HAS TAKEN TO STREETS IN LAHORE SINCE OPPOSITION MOVEMENT BEGAN MARCH 14. SEVERAL PEACEFUL PROCESSIONS WERE TAKEN OUT FROM MOSQUES IN VARIOUS OTHER PARTS OF TOWN EARLIER IN THE DAY. HARTAL REMAINED IN EFFECT OVER MOST OF THE CITY, WITH AT LEAST 70-80P.C. SHOPS CLOSED.

3. DEFECTIONS FROM PPP CONTINUE, FURTHER WEAKENING BHUTOO'S HOLD IN PUNJAB. LATEST TO COME OUT IS FORMER PUNJAB MINISTER FOR INFORMATION, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, AIRAZ, WHO RESIGNED FROM HIS SEAT IN PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY APRIL 13 IN PROTEST AGAINST POLICE FIRING IN LAHORE PREVIOUS SATURDAY. IN LETTER TO BHUTTO INFORMING HIM ABOUT HIS DECISION, AHSAN SAID THAT EVENTS OF APRIL 9 IN LAHORE ARE WELL KNOWN AND A PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY THAT SITS UNDER SHADOW OF SECURITY FORCES LOSES ITS MEANING. AHSAN STATED HE IS MEMBER OF LAWYERS' COMMUNITY AND WANTS TO RETAIN HIS SOCIAL TIES WITH THAT GROUP AS WELL AS OTHER CLASSES OF SOCIETY (LAHORE HIGH COURT BAR ASSOCIATION HAD PREVIOUSLY CANCELLED MEMBERSHIP OF PPP MEMBERS WHO HAD BEEN ELECTED TO PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES AND IMPOSED "SOCIAL BOYCOTT" ON THEM.) AHSAN DENIED THAT HE WAS A WITNESS TO ANY ELECTION IRREGULARITIES IN HIS OWN CONSTITUENCY OR PLAYED ANY PART IN THEM, EXPLAINING THAT HE WAS ILL ON ELECTION DAY AND STAYED AWAY FROM POLLS. RESIGNATION OF PPP SECRETARY GENERAL MUBASHIR

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HWLSAN REPORTED REFTTEL (A) HAS BEEN CONFIRMED IN PRESS AND DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL SYED NASIR ALI RIZVI HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO ACT IN HIS STEAD. IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT OTHER DEFECTIONS WILL FOLLOW.

4. A NUMBER OF BANKS IN LAHORE ARE REPORTEDLY FACING PROBLEMS DUE TO WITHDRAWAL OF DEPOSITS. WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE AMOUNT OF MONEY INVOLVED, ONE PPP SOURCE HAS NOTED THAT WITHDRAWALS REFLECT LACK OF CONFIDENCE WHICH IS A MATTER OF CONCERN TO PARTY. BANK OF AMERICA REPORTED RUPEES ONE MILLION (\$100,000) IN NEW DEPOSITS IN A SINGLE MORNING. HOWEVER, CITIBANK AND AMERICAN EXPRESS CLAIM DEPOSITS ARE RUNNING ABOUT NORMAL. CITIBANK AND BANK OF AMERICA MANAGERS HAVE TOLD CONGEN THAT POLITICAL SITUATION IS HAVING ADVERSE AFFECT ON EXPORT BUSINESS OF THEIR CLIENTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE DEPENDENT ON SHIPMENTS THROUGH KARACHI.

5. VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS WERE HELD AGAIN IN SIALKOT APRIL 13 WHEN DEMONSTRATORS BURNED A VEHICLE AND STONED

A NUMBER OF SHOPS. LOOTING WAS REPORTED AND CLASHES WITH POLICE OCCURRED AT MANY PLACES IN THE CITY. PEACEFUL PROTEST MARCHES WERE HELD IN A NUMBER OF OTHER TOWNS. SCATTERED HARTALS WERE ALSO OBSERVED.

6. PROVINCE IS TENSE AS WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE IS EXPECTED DURING MAJOR PNA PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS SCHEDULED APRIL 14.

7. BECAUSE OF EXPECTED DETERIORATION IN SECURITY AROUND LAHORE, CONGEN, USIS AND USAID OFFICES ARE DISMISSING ALL BUT KEY LOCAL EMPLOYEES AT NOON, APRIL 15, AND WILL PROVIDE THOSE REMAING ON DUTY WITH OFFICIAL TRANSPORTATION HOME AT END OF DAY.

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Message Attributes

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